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Forty-ninth session

REQUEST FOR INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE SOUTH PACIFIC FORUM IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 16 August 1994 from the representatives of Australia, Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to address Your Excellency, upon instructions from our Governments which are members of the South Pacific Forum, to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the South Pacific Forum in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution concerning the request are annexed to the present letter (see annexes I and II).

(Signed) Richard ROWE
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Australia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Graham E. LEUNG
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the
Republic of Fiji to the
United Nations

(Signed) David PANUELO
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the
Federated States of Micronesia
to the United Nations

(Signed) William J. SWAIN
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of the
Republic of the Marshall Islands
to the United Nations

(Signed) Colin KEATING
Permanent Representative of
New Zealand to the
United Nations

(Signed) Utula U. SAMANA
Permanent Representative of
Papua New Guinea to the
United Nations

(Signed) Rex Stephen HORI
Permanent Representative of
Solomon Islands to the
United Nations

(Signed) Tuiloma Neroni SLADE
Permanent Representative of the
Independent State of Western Samoa
to the United Nations

(Signed) Jean RAVOU-AKII
Permanent Representative of
Republic of Vanuatu to the
United Nations

ANNEX I

Explanatory memorandum

1. The South Pacific Forum, which first met in 1971, is the political grouping of the 15 independent or self-governing States in the South Pacific. It meets annually, at the Heads of Government level, to develop collective responses on a wide range of regional issues, including trade, economic development, civil aviation and maritime issues, telecommunications, energy and political and security matters. In addition, the South Pacific Forum maintains a dialogue after each Heads of Government meeting with a number of external Governments and organizations.

2. The South Pacific Forum, in an agreement signed and ratified by its 15 members, has established a secretariat whose mission is to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people of the South Pacific, in support of the efforts of national Governments. Its objectives are:

(a) To implement effectively the directives of the Forum, and provide it and its ancillary bodies with efficient secretariat and support services;

(b) To provide timely policy analysis and advice to the Forum and its individual member countries, on political and economic issues;

(c) To facilitate sustainable regional development aimed at enhancing the well-being of the people of the South Pacific;

(d) To implement regional policies and programmes that support the priorities of Forum countries, and to pay particular attention to the most disadvantaged States and to the smaller island States;

(e) To manage the secretariat in an efficient manner ensuring the effective delivery of services and programmes and timely responses to country needs;

(f) To further the interests of the South Pacific by fostering regional cooperation, developing effective partnerships with countries and organizations, disseminating the views of the Forum and representing the Forum's concerns internationally.

3. As a regional organization representing 15 members, of which 9 are members of the United Nations, the States members of the South Pacific Forum are of the view that the Forum could benefit greatly from an observer relationship with the United Nations, and could also contribute to the activities of the Organization.

4. Accordingly, the South Pacific Forum requests that it be granted observer status at the General Assembly on terms similar to those that have been prescribed in respect of other associations of States.

ANNEX II

Draft resolution

Observer status for the South Pacific Forum in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Noting the desire of the South Pacific Forum for cooperation between the United Nations and the South Pacific Forum,

1. Decides to invite the South Pacific Forum to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

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REQUEST FOR AN INCLUSION OF A SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM IN THE AGENDA OF THE FORTY-NINTH SESSION

OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Letter dated 16 August 1994 from the representatives of Armenia, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Denmark, Finland, Guinea, Iceland, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Mexico, Norway, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Sweden, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine and Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from our Governments, we are writing to request, in accordance with rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, an explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution are attached to the present letter (see annexes I and II).

We inform Your Excellency that since this matter first came under discussion in December 1993, it has been subject to the widest consultations.

(Signed) Armen V. BAIBOURTIAN
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Armenia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Edgar CAMACHO OMISTE
Permanent Representative of Bolivia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Richard ROWE
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Australia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Louise FRECHETTE
Permanent Representative of Canada
to the United Nations

(Signed) Rodolfo JARAMILLO
Minister Plenipotentiary
Permanent Mission of Colombia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Emilia CASTRO de BARISH
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Costa Rica
to the United Nations

(Signed) Kramo KONAN
First Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Côte d'Ivoire
to the United Nations

(Signed) Their TRUELSEN
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Denmark
to the United Nations

(Signed) Iivo SALMI
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Finland
to the United Nations

(Signed) Aboubacar DIONE
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Guinea
to the United Nations

(Signed) Tómas A. TOMASSON
Permanent Representative
of Iceland to the
United Nations

(Signed) Nugroho WISNUMURTI
Permanent Representative of
Indonesia to the United Nations

(Signed) Rajab M. SUKAYRI
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Jordan
to the United Nations

(Signed) Askar AITMATOV
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Kyrgyzstan
to the United Nations

(Signed) Christian WENAWESER
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein
to the United Nations

(Signed) S. THANARAJASINGAM
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Malaysia
to the United Nations

(Signed) Victor Flores OLEA
Permanent Representative of Mexico
to the United Nations

(Signed) Svein AASS
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Norway to the United Nations

(Signed) Sher Afgan KHAN
Deputy Permanent Representative
of Pakistan to the United Nations

(Signed) Alimamy Pallo BANGURA
Permanent Representative of
Sierra Leone to the United Nations

(Signed) Peter TONKA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Slovakia to
the United Nations

(Signed) Peter OSVALD
Permanent Representative of Sweden
to the United Nations

(Signed) Inal BATU
Permanent Representative of Turkey
to the United Nations

(Signed) Perezi KARUKUBIRO KAMUNANWIRE
Permanent Representative of Uganda
to the United Nations

(Signed) Borys M. HUDYMA
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the
Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the United Nations

(Signed) Enrique TEJERA-PARIS
Permanent Representative of Venezuela
to the United Nations

ANNEX I

[Original: Arabic, English, French and Spanish]

Explanatory memorandum

1. Founded in 1919, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (formerly the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) is the federation of all 162 recognized National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies of the world. It acts under its own Constitution with all rights and obligations of a corporate body with a legal personality. Its secretariat is based in Geneva (Switzerland).

2. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies members of the Federation are recognized as voluntary aid societies, auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field, by the legal Governments of their respective countries on the basis of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 for the Protection of War Victims (to which, currently, 185 States are party) and of the national legislation.

The member societies of the Federation are entrusted with tasks of a public character deriving directly from universal international treaties including the 1949 Geneva Conventions, from the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (as modified by the 25th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Geneva, 1986, in which all States parties to the Geneva Conventions took part), from the resolutions of the said Conference or from their national legislation.

3. A recent survey established that the member societies of the Federation are together representing some 125 million members and volunteers with approximately 277,000 employed staff. The yearly turnover of the national programmes (basic education, health care and social welfare programmes, ambulance services, blood collection and transfusion, etc.) managed by these Societies is about 23 billion Swiss francs (currently equivalent to $17.2 billion).

4. In accordance with its Constitution, the Federation is the official representative of its member societies in the international field and the guardian of their integrity and the protector of their interests.

5. The functions of the Federation, endorsed by States when they adopted the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, are, inter alia,

- To bring relief by all available means to all disaster victims;

- To organize, coordinate and direct international relief actions and to assist the national societies in their disaster relief preparedness;

- To bring help to victims of armed conflicts in accordance with the agreements concluded with the International Committee of the Red Cross;

- To encourage and promote in every country the establishment and development of an independent and duly recognized national society;

- To carry out the mandates entrusted to it by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

6. With an average of well above 300 delegates working in 11 regional and 56 country delegations, the Federation secretariat, with the support of its member societies that provide the major part of the funds, relief consignments and personnel, has been active in 1993 throughout the world providing assistance to victims of disasters and sustaining development programmes. In particular, the Federation is increasingly addressing the needs of displaced persons and refugees. New international relief appeals launched in 1993 totalled some SwF 409.7 million ($315 million) and were programmed to assist 15.2 million people world wide. By the middle of 1994, the figures had increased dramatically to SwF 354.4 million to assist 16.7 million people. Out of this amount, approximately 65 per cent had been programmed to support refugees and displaced persons.

7. Article 25 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, as well as resolutions of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (see, respectively, General Assembly resolution 55 (I) of 1946 and Economic and Social Council resolution 21 (III) of 1946) called upon States to promote and support independent Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on their territory.

The development of the Federation has further been associated with the international community exploring the possibility of far-reaching developments in the field of international humanitarian assistance. The specific competence and nature of the Federation has frequently been recognized in resolutions of the General Assembly of the United Nations (see, for example, General Assembly resolution 2034 (XX) of 1965; resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 1971; resolution 36/225 of 1981; resolution 37/144 of 1982 and resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 on "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations").

8. The tasks of the Federation and the United Nations increasingly complement one another. A particularly close cooperation has over the years evolved with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. However, the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has given focus to the humanitarian agenda within the central United Nations organs. The role and function of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (as successor of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Organization) is today a concern both for the Economic and Social Council as well as for the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Federation being offered together with the International Committee of the Red Cross a standing invitation to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (by General Assembly resolution 46/182), these United Nations organs, in their

striving for effective coordination of humanitarian relief, would considerably benefit from the Federation's advice and expertise through their granting it the status of observer in the General Assembly.

9. Through the adoption of the statutes of the Movement, States are committed:

- "To cooperate with the components of the Movement in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, the statutes of the Movement and the resolutions of the International Conference;

- To promote the establishment on their territory of a national society and encourage its development;

- To support, whenever possible, the work of the components of the Movement;

- To respect at all times the adherence by all the components of the Movement to the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality)."

Through their adopting resolutions in the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, States have repeatedly confirmed and enhanced these commitments.

Moreover, by adopting article 81 of the First Additional Protocol of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, States parties to that Protocol, as well as "Parties to the conflict, shall facilitate in every possible way the assistance which Red Cross (...) organizations and the League of Red Cross Societies extend to the victims of conflicts (...)".

10. In recent years, an increasing number of States have extended to the Federation and its field delegations - through agreements or otherwise - a treatment similar to that of diplomatic representations or intergovernmental organizations.

11. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement practises a close cooperation between its components both in the field and at the secretariat level. The statutes of the Movement, adopted together with States in the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, affirm the desire for unity, harmony and coordination among the components of the Movement.

In view of the equivalent concern of all components of the Movement effectively to carry out their mandate and the direct operational necessity of their relating directly and equally to the General Assembly and Security Council, the Federation, as representative of the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, is desirous of being invited to participate as an observer in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly. It would at the same time be beneficial to the General Assembly and increase the effectiveness of the Movement as a whole were the Federation to be admitted as an observer, thereby complementing the contribution of the International Committee of the Red Cross in terms of its different mandate, as well as know-how and operational capacity.

12. The Federation has the similar specificity as the United Nations in building its membership on the principle of one country - one member. Both promote universality as a leading principle. The Federation is an international organization composed of member societies, the unique character and mandate of which has been defined, at the national as well as the international level, by nearly all the States that are the very members of the United Nations. This represents, both in substance and in structure, a unique position in the international community.

13. Lastly, but not least, the Federation considers that, as a humanitarian organization which is involved globally, on a huge scale, in disaster relief operations as well as day-to-day health and social programmes, it would be important and mutually beneficial to have the opportunity to participate as an observer in the work of the General Assembly when policy on humanitarian issues is developed and discussed. In addition, Federation observer status with the General Assembly would be of mutual benefit to the two organizations and, above all, to disaster victims as it would further strengthen communications and operational cooperation between the United Nations and the Federation, thereby increasing the effectiveness of the Movement as a whole.

ANNEX II

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling the special functions of the member societies of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which are recognized by their respective Governments as auxiliaries to the public authorities in the humanitarian field on the basis of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949,

Considering the specific role of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in international humanitarian relations as further defined by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent,

Desirous of promoting cooperation between the United Nations and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies,

1. Decides to invite the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;

2. Requests the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.

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